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XL 7





# SHORT STORIES FROM THE DICTIONARY

BY

ARTHUR GILMAN, M. A.

Author of "A HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE,"  
"THE STORY OF ROME," ETC.

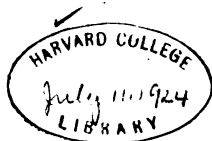
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"Words are things; and a small drop of ink,  
Falling like dew, upon a thought, produces  
That which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think."

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## A WORD WITH THE YOUNG READER.

It is not every young person (nor old person either, for that matter) who reflects upon the riches of that most familiar book, the Dictionary. Not everyone who knows that the volume is a rich one, uses it as much as would be profitable.

Examination will prove that it contains poetry, grammar, rhetoric; advice and enlightenment regarding manners, customs, mythology, history, pronunciation — besides a host of other things that we cannot stop to catalogue.

It is entertaining as a means by which a passing hour may be profitably whiled away; it is necessary as a means of acquiring exactness in writing and speaking; and, as it is now furnished, it explains much that is familiarly uttered or written in foreign tongues, which would otherwise be unintelligible to ordinary readers.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has placed a copy of the big dictionary in every school under its care, and probably many another State has done the same; but it cannot be said that every boy and girl in those schools uses the volume, or even knows how to use it.

The following pages have been written in the hope of showing to some extent how the great dictionaries may be made useful to their readers.



# SHORT STORIES

## FROM THE DICTIONARY.

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### I.

#### WHAT A BIG BOX HELD.

A FEW years ago I was in Springfield, Massachusetts, and was shown a great chest, bigger than almost any Saratoga trunk that I had ever seen, in which was a collection of papers. The gentleman who showed me the chest said that it contained the "copy" that had been given to the printer when the last edition of Webster's Dictionary had been printed. Suppose you take down your dictionary and try to imagine how big a pile of paper it would take to write it all out. You know that before the printers could print the book some one had to write it. Here is a great volume of about two thousand pages, but it would take many more pages than that to write it all out with a pen. If you count the lines on each of these great pages you will find that there are many of them. I think it would take about

thirty pages of paper to write out what is on one of the pages of the dictionary : that would make sixty thousand sheets for the whole volume ; but I am pretty sure that it took more than that. It would tire many of my readers to write ten pages every day ; but if they could do as many as that, it would take them twenty years to write the whole of Webster's Dictionary. What do you think of the man who sat down to a work like that ?

After I had written these words, I took up Mr. Scudder's interesting book about "Noah Webster," and found that it actually took the author of the dictionary just twenty years to write it. He was forty-eight years old when he began it, and sixty-eight when he finished it in 1826. He completed the actual writing in 1825, but there was much to be done after that. He says of the completion of the work, "When I had finished my copy, I was sitting at my table in Cambridge, England, January, 1825. When I arrived at the last word, I was seized with a tremor that made it difficult to proceed. I, however, summoned up strength to finish the work, and then, walking about the room, I soon recovered." This shows

how important he considered it was to have a good dictionary. He thought that he was making a book that would be national, and he called it (as you will see it is still called) the "American" Dictionary of the English language. He put into it many words that were not found in Dr. Johnson's Dictionary, which was then the great authority in England; and because he was proud of his country, he added a large number that he thought were used in America only. He considered that we have as much right to use the English language as we choose as the people of England have. The English act as though they do not agree to this. They think that a word is not proper to be used if it is not used in their country; but Mr. Webster thought that Americans had the right to use words as they pleased. He had studied the subject a long time, and before he began the twenty years' work for his great dictionary, had published a smaller book of the same kind. He had given the schools a spelling-book which was used everywhere, and was probably sold more extensively than any other book ever published in America.

I have been led into this talk about Noah Webster,

because I intended to consider at this time the dictionary itself, rather than the words in it. Webster said that there were about seventy or eighty thousand words in his American dictionary, but the latest editors say that they include one hundred and fourteen thousand words. That is a great many. You will find that you use but a small number yourself in speaking and writing, and that even learned authors do not use a tenth part of the words Mr. Webster had in his dictionary at first.

Since Mr. Scudder's book has been published, the witty editors of the newspapers have been making fun of the old writer. He was a queer man, or, at least, if we were to meet one like him in the parlor of a friend, we should think him odd. I read in a western paper not long ago something like this :

"Noah Webster was a celebrated author. He was a quick and ready writer, and in one of his inspired moments dashed off a dictionary. He took it to several publishers, but they declined to print it, saying that the style was dull, dry, turgid, hard and uninteresting, and besides that he used too many big words. But at last Noah succeeded, and the immortal work is in

daily use propping up babies at the dinner table."

Webster was not a man to be laughed at, however. He was a man who succeeded in what he undertook, and Americans are not accustomed to laugh at success, especially when it is achieved in a good work. Webster looked on to the time when there should be five hundred millions of people in our land, and he truly thought it no mean labor to give them a book that should tell them how to use their language.

Now we will open our "Unabridged." It is page 200 that appears as I lay the big book open before me. There are sixty-nine words explained on this page. The first is "carpologist:" do you know what a carpologist is? It is a pretty hard word. How did Webster find out what it meant? He was not a carpologist, so far as I know. You would not dare to call him one without finding out what the word means, I am sure. It might be something very bad. We must begin at the end of this word to learn its meaning. We often hear people speak of the "ologies," by which they refer to those sciences the names of which end in "ology," which comes from the Greek word "logos," that means "discourse,"



"treatise;" and you will find on page 911 of the "Unabridged," that DeQuincey wrote of some one, "He had a smattering of mechanics, of physiology, geology, mineralogy, and all other 'ologies' whatsoever."

"Carpology" is the science of something. That is plain. Webster says it is a part of botany that relates to the structure of seeds and fruit. He found this out by asking some botanist, or by finding in his Greek dictionary a word "karpos," meaning fruit. He may have been obliged to search through a number of books before he found out the meaning of this one word. He had to go through such a process nearly seventy times before he had finished the words of page 200.

A little further down we come to the word "carriage," and I suppose you think you do not need to look at it. You know what it means. Mr. Webster did not think so. He examined his several dictionaries of foreign languages to see what they had to say about the word. He found that there were words like it in the Italian, the Old French and the Low Latin. Then he looked through a number of English

books to see how writers used the word. He found that it had five meanings. He put them down. The first was, "Something that is carried." I suppose you would have told me that a carriage is something that carries you; but if you had read your Bible better, you would have remembered that when "David left his 'carriage' in the hand of the keeper of the 'carriage,'" he did not leave anything that had carried him; for people rode on beasts, or walked in those days. The second meaning is, "The act of carrying." The third is the common meaning, "That which carries." The fourth is, "Behavior;" as when I speak of the way in which a young lady carries herself in private. The fifth meaning is, "Management, practice." It was no easy matter to find out these five meanings of one word, and that a common one. Besides telling what the word means, you will notice that Mr. Webster has told us how to pronounce it. It is not "car-ri-age," but "kar-rij."

A little further on I find the word "carry." That seems so easy to understand that it is hardly necessary to look it out in a dictionary; and yet I fear that you could not all tell me the eight different meanings

that it has (Worcester's Dictionary gives ten). Do you know what "to carry coals" means? I have heard young people use the expression "carrying on," which is only countenanced by the dictionary as "colloquial," though to "carry on" a business is correct English.

I suppose that many persons think that the conveyance called a "carryall" is so named because it "carries" all who get into it; but we find that the word has no direct suggestion of carrying, being a corruption of the French "carriole," a low carriage; though that comes from the Latin "carrus," a cart or wagon, showing that to carry meant at first to convey in a vehicle on wheels, and not to carry in other ways. While looking at this word, I have thought of the sort of carriage called the "Rock-away," and cannot find the origin of the name. Are any of my readers bright enough to find this out?

I find on this page the word "carrol," that is also spelled "carol." You think that you know what a carol is; but I wish you would look at your dictionary and see if this is not a new meaning for the word. Mr.

Webster says that a carol is "a small closet." How can that be? The word comes from the Latin "corona," through its diminutive, "corolla," a little crown. Corona means a crown or garland, but the word was applied also to anything that was round, like a wreath, or that encircled anything. Thus it was applied to a wall around a town, a circular ridge of mountains, or a cornice around a building. A closet is a room closed in, surrounded by something which separates it from the rest of the world. It was a place where one might have a desk or place to read undisturbed. Probably there was a window in such a reading closet, and the name "carol" is given by architects to a window now. It is a long and round-about way from a wreath to a window; but an old writer goes further, and calls a circle of Druidical stones a "carol," because it surrounded a space of land. A carol was properly a round dance; but it came to mean a song that accompanied the dance. "Carola," in Italian, means a ring dance, as well as a song. The idea of something round is prominent in the different meanings of the word.

You see there is a good deal on one page of

Webster's Dictionary, and we have only skimmed the surface of this one. Think of two thousand such pages !

## II.

### OUTSIDE AND INSIDE.

**W**EBSTER'S Dictionary has become much more of a volume than it was at first. I have shown you that it contains a great variety of useful and entertaining information, but I have only begun to open its treasures. I have not mentioned its pictures. It is one of the best picture-books that can be shown to a child. I have often tried it with a little child less than four years old, and have found her ever ready to see more pictures in the "big book." The pictures are useful for grown people, as well as entertaining to little ones.

Here are two pages given up to the bones and muscles of our bodies. We can all learn a great deal from them. Do you know what your "patella" is? You would know if I were to give you a stout blow on it. Then there are the "tibia," the "fib-

ula," the "ulna" and the "clavicles," and enough more to make up seventy-six that are represented in this picture, besides I know not how many more. I think it is worth a good deal to know all about so many bones and muscles in our bodies, and that without having to go to a medical school to study.

There are hundreds of these pictures, showing the forms of many sorts of animals, how all different sorts of ships are rigged, how the different races of men can be recognized, how machines of many kinds appear, how houses are framed, and a hundred other things that I cannot stop to mention. Here is a picture of an engine, so exact that an ingenious boy could make one that would "go," simply by studying the cut.

The dictionary is a book that you need all the time. As you read, you need it near, for it not only tells you what the hard words mean, but who the *persons* are who are mentioned in history. Or, suppose you go to church and hear the clergyman speak of some great man of whom you have never heard, you have but to turn to the end of your dictionary, and there you find something about him, be he Agrippa, or Augustine, or De

Wette, or Tetzels, or Zoroaster or Zwinglius. Suppose he refer to "the goddess of reason," and you have never heard of the lady. You look into the list of "Noted names of fiction," and there you have the whole story of how she was worshipped in the irregular days of the French Revolution. It may be "Pride's purge" that is mentioned, and you need not be ashamed to be ignorant of what it means. However, you need not be ignorant long, for the good friend, the dictionary, tells all about it. We all know something about "Jack Horner," but few of us know so much as the dictionary. Here, too, are accounts of "Tom Thumb," "Jack the Giant-Killer," "Uncle Sam," and "The man in the moon." You will soon ask, "What is there not in the dictionary?" and well you may, for it seems as if it were a whole library. It is very much like a library. Suppose you take a book of three hundred pages and count the words in it, and then compare the result with a like computation of the words in the dictionary. Here is a book of three hundred pages. There are about two hundred words on each page. That makes about sixty thousand words. Now let us count the words in the



dictionary. I think I see you start back at the thought of so great a job, but we can do it more readily than you think, perhaps. Let us try.

I find that there are about one hundred and ten lines in every column of the dictionary, and as there are three columns on every page, there are three hundred and thirty lines. The lines average ten words each, which gives us three thousand three hundred words on a page. Some of the type used is smaller than that which I have measured, and it may be that there are really more words on a page than that, but we will take it that the estimate is correct. At the end of the volume I find that there are nineteen hundred and twenty-eight pages in the book. Multiplying the number of words on a page by the number of pages, we have as product six million three hundred and sixty-five thousand seven hundred words in the book. If we divide this big number by sixty thousand—the number of words that we found in the volume of three hundred pages—we find that the result is one hundred and six. Therefore, if we have not made a mistake in the calculation, the dictionary is equal to a library of one hundred and six

volumes of three hundred pages each. Such a volume is worth about a dollar, or a dollar and a quarter. Calling it a dollar, we find that the dictionary is worth one hundred and six dollars. The generous publishers sell it to us for ten or twelve dollars, your bookseller will tell you which. So it is not only a library, but a pretty cheap one, is it not? We ought to have a good deal of respect for so big and so cheap a book.

We are looking at the outside of the dictionary, as it were, now. As we open it we are met by the table of contents, which shows how much there is to be found before we turn the last page. Then we come to three prefaces. Taking them in the order in which they were written, we find one by Noah Webster himself, written in 1828, in which he tells the story of his work in part. Next there is a preface written in 1847, when the dictionary had been almost made over new by Professor Chauncey A. Goodrich, of Yale College. This shows how hard it is to make a good dictionary, and how many men were obliged to labor together in making this one new. Lastly, there is a long preface written by President Porter,

of Yale College, in 1864, and added to in 1879, which tells the story of new and greater labors than ever. If you will take the time to read these prefaces, I think you will become interested in the subject of words and their history; and it is because I want you to have this taste, that I am writing these chapters about the dictionary.

After you have got through the prefaces, you will come to a memoir of Noah Webster, by Professor Goodrich, that is not so interesting as the one by Mr. Scudder, of which I have told you, but is still worth reading. Next you have a "History of the English language," by Professor Hadley, who was one of the most learned scholars that we have ever had in America.

Children cannot be expected to have much interest in this history, because it contains much that they cannot understand; but it would be well for them to look at it, so as not to think it a strange thing when they notice it in turning over the leaves of the book when they are older. It shows what sort of a language ours is, and how it has changed during the history of England and America. On one page I see that our word "good" was once spelt "god,"

and it makes me think that God is so called because we think of him as the "Good One." Do you not suppose that is the true reason? On the same page I see that "why" was once spelt "hwy," and that explains to me why we pronounce the "h" before the "w" now. Did you ever notice that? The same is true of "which," that was spelt "hwich," and it is plainer to be noticed that "h" comes before the "w" in that word.

A little further over, I find some specimens of the English of our forefathers, and it looks very strange at first; but as I look at it, I see some words that I can recognize. Here are some of the words: "andswarode," "wyrce," "man," "min," "hym," "hys," and they remind me of "answered," "work," "man," "mine," "him," "his." These were written long before Webster's Spelling-book had been thought of, at a time when it seems to us as though every man spelt as he chose. You will think many of the words in these specimens of old English very strange, and perhaps some of them will look "funny" to you. It will do you good to look at them, even if you do not do it very carefully.

After these things we find a "key" to the pronunciation of the words in the book, and some pages of the "principles of pronunciation," all of which must be understood if one would be able to make the *best* use of the dictionary itself. After this come some pages of words that are not spelt nor pronounced alike by different authors who have made dictionaries. It is rather difficult for us to know how to pronounce a word if we find the dictionaries do not agree. Perhaps the *easiest* way to get along in such cases is to have but one dictionary, and to follow that; but I think it is better to see how the different writers treat the words, and then try to make up your mind. That teaches you to study the matter yourself. Here in America we do not like to follow any one's authority too closely, but we have been taught to have minds of our own. If we try to act on this principle we shall be stronger, and our knowledge will be more valuable than if we were crammed with more simply taken from one book.

### III.

#### HOW WORDS HAVE CHANGED THEIR MEANINGS.

**I**T would be a great help to many who read the Bible if they would also read the dictionary. I once heard a good deacon pray for a blessing on the "Gospel that had been dispensed with" the day he spoke. It was probably true that the Gospel had been "dispensed with" by a good many persons, but that was not exactly what the deacon referred to. If he had read his dictionary, he would have understood the meaning of the word dispense.

I read very frequently in the writings of men who ought to know better, such sentences as "to begin with." In this place the word "with" is almost as much out of place as in the deacon's prayer. I wish you would notice, and see if you cannot catch some good writer in this mistake. If you do, you may write to the Editor of *The Wide Awake*,

(Boston, Mass.,) about it. She would like to hear from you on any of the topics I treat.

There is a good deal of strength in the association of ideas. I once heard an anecdote of a man who was found reading a dictionary, and some one asked him how he liked his book. He replied that the stories were interesting, but very short. I suppose that it was the recollection of this anecdote that led me to call these papers "Short Stories from the Dictionary," though I did not think of the story at the time. The phrase remained in my memory, and came to the surface when I needed it. It is a great advantage to have good associations in the mind. That is one thought which encourages me in writing about words.

There are a great many interesting words in the Bible, and we shall now look at a few of them. I suppose that some readers do not understand the word "enlarged" as it is used in the first verse of the fourth Psalm, nor "enlargement" in the fourteenth verse of the fourth chapter of Esther. We have no difficulty in understanding the verse in Esther, for the word "deliverance" follows immedi-

ately, and the two mean the same thing. When we use the word "enlarge," we mean make greater. We speak of enlarging a hole or a dress. Enlarging a dress does not make it more free, but it sometimes makes the person who wears it feel more free and comfortable. At the time the Bible was translated, the word "enlarge" meant to set free, to deliver. In the twenty-second chapter of Second Samuel, David says that God had "enlarged" his feet, meaning simply that God had set his feet free, not that He had made them larger, as a careless reader might suppose.

The word "advertise" occurs frequently in modern newspapers, and you may find it in the Bible, but it does not have the same meaning in the two places. In both instances, it means "to turn the attention to" something, but there were no newspapers in which Boaz could advertise the real estate of Naomi, as he said he wished to do (Ruth, iv. 4), and so he had to sit at the city gate and call one and another as they passed, and tell them to sit down and listen to him as he described the condition of the property. It was not a very pleasant way to advertise, one



would think. I have read of an old author who spoke of "advertisements of lies," but with no reference to the deceptive advertisements of modern times. When you read Shakespeare's writings, you will find that, as used by the great poet, the word "advertise" means simply "notify."

"Admire" is a word that has changed its meaning. It comes from a Latin word meaning "to wonder." You will find that the revisers of the New Testament knew this, and changed the sixth verse of the seventeenth chapter of Revelation and the tenth verse of the first chapter of Second Thessalonians. If you have the new version, I wish you would compare these verses. You will see that, in the first place, "I wondered with great admiration" has been changed to "I wondered with a great wonder;" and in the second passage, the change is from "to be admired" to "to be marvelled at." You might not understand Milton when he says:

"Let none admire  
That riches grow in hell."

You will find that admire had begun to change its

meaning as long ago as the time of Shakespeare, which was also the time when the Bible was translated, so that he used it in both the new and the old sense.

When you read your Bible you must not think that "mortify" means in it what it does in other books. When *you* say you are "mortified," you mean only that you are chagrined, depressed, humbled; but that is not what the old scholar Erasmus meant when he said that Christ was "mortified." It is not what is meant by "mortify the deeds of the body" (Rom. viii. 13) and "mortify, therefore, your members" (Col. iii. 5). To "mortify," meant to make dead. You speak of a person who is "mortal," meaning that he is subject to death, and of the "mortification" of a limb, meaning that it has become dead. You will see that the revisers have changed the words in both of the passages I have quoted from the New Testament.

The word "sad" interests me very much. We often speak of a man who is "set" in his ways, without thinking of his being a "sad" man, but the meaning of "set" and "sad" were not far apart five

hundred years ago. When Wiclif translated the Bible, he wrote that the foundation of God is "sad," and standeth sure (2 Tim. ii. 19); that the house in the parable was built on a "sad" stone (Luke, vi. 48); that the "sadder" men ought to sustain the feebleness of the sick men (Rom. xvi. 1); that some have need of "mylke and not 'sad' mete" (Heb. v. 19); and he spoke of hope as an anchor to the soul, secure and "sad" (Heb. v. 19).

"Sad" did not mean at that time grave, gloomy or melancholy, as it does now. It simply meant fixed, solid, substantial, set. When plaster of Paris or any fluid becomes fixed, solid, we say that it has "set." When a farmer says that he has "set" certain fence-posts, we understand that he has fixed them firmly in the ground; and when we say that he is "set" in his ways, we mean that he cannot be moved any more readily than his fence-posts can. You may have heard the "sad-iron" mentioned in the kitchen. It is simply a heavy iron which is set in its ways. When it is set down on a piece of damp starched cambric, it sets the starch and makes the folds difficult of removal.

It was a long time before I understood the verb "ear" (Deut. xxi. 4; 1 Sam. viii. 12; Isaiah, xxx. 24). I thought that "earing" and harvest were about the same thing, for the grain is surely in the ear at harvest-time. When you study Latin you will meet a verb, "arare," and will be told that it means to plough. Then you may *guess* that to "ear" is to plough, and you will be right. You will read in Shakespeare's play, "All's well that ends well." "He that ears my land spares my team."

This word is all the more difficult to be understood because there is a verb "to ear," meaning "to put forth the ear in growing, to form ears, as corn."

"Fare" is a word that we should not easily misunderstand (1 Sam. xviii. 18). "To fare" is "to go, to travel." We ask a friend, "How goes it?" meaning, "How do you fare?" We speak of welfare, of farewell, of a wayfarer, a thoroughfare, our fare in the coach, and in many other ways use the word with little thought of the meaning of the word fare. Milton says:

"So on he fares, and to the border comes  
Of Eden."

"Farewell " means "go in peace ;" but when I say "fare well at a hotel, I mean that I have good fare, good things to eat, things that make the world go well with me. In the parable we read of a man who "fared sumptuously " (Luke, xvi. 19). A thoroughfare is a road that goes through a region, and a wayfarer is one who goes on a way or road.

It is interesting to see how words get in time a meaning just opposite to the one they at first had. "Fearful " and "dreadful " have thus changed. A fearful man once meant one who was full of fear, but now it means one so terrible as to inspire others with fear. I ought to say that fearful still has its old meaning, but it is not so with dreadful. That never means full of dread, as it used to, but inspiring dread.

#### IV.

##### CAN A WORD BE KILLED?

**I**T seems to me that there is nothing so hard to kill as a word. I have heard farmers say that a weed is the hardest thing to kill, and it seems to many of us that it is easier to kill a good thing than a bad one. "Whom the gods love, die young," is a proverb, you know. Yet words are good things, and I shall show you that it is very hard to kill one of them.

That very common word "academy" is very old. Did you ever think how old? Its history carries us back to times before there *was* any history. The first I have heard of the word is this: There was a hero named Theseus who accomplished many marvellous feats. He was once in want of a wife, and

carried off from Sparta a young lady named Helen. He took her to a place near Athens to be educated. Helen had two brave brothers, named Castor and Pollux, who determined to get her away from Theseus. They could not have found her had not a hero named Academus informed them where she was hidden. Ever after that time the farm of Academus, on which there was a pleasant grove, was protected by the people of Sparta when there was war between them and the people of Athens.

In the course of time there arose a man named Plato, who was remarkably wise. He is said to have lived at about the time that the prophet Malachi wrote. Not contented with being wise, he wished to make others wise also. He used to ask scholars to dinner, and he had his tables set in the beautiful grove that had belonged to Academus. In time his school came to be called the "Academy." It became very famous. Other schools were formed, and though they were not held in the grove of Academus, they were called academies. Now, more than two thousand years after the time of Plato, and no one knows how long after the time of the old hero

Academus, his name is one of the most common words in the English language, a language that was not thought of much more than a thousand years ago. Does not this show that a word has a long life?

Perhaps you think that I am a very wise man because I know so much about the history of this word ; but I assure you that I have learned almost all that I have told you from a book that is to be found in all schools and academies, as well as in most of the houses of the pupils. It lies on one of the tables in my library, and is full of short stories like this one. It is "Webster's Unabridged Dictionary." Almost every word in this big book has a history, and some of them are very amusing as well as instructive. The words are not all old, for some are very young, like the verb "boycott," which has not yet got into the dictionaries, not even into the "Unabridged," which contains almost all words that are now used in our language.

A witty man in England once wrote, "There is one thing I feel very grateful to my father for having taught me, the habit of immediately hunting out any subject I found myself ignorant of." He said also, "Never submit to be ignorant when you have knowl-



edge at your elbow." I might preach a long sermon to you from these two sayings as texts, but I shall not do it. I will only say that if you get the habit of looking into the dictionary when you want information, you will gain a great deal in a pleasant way. Of course you cannot learn the meaning of such a word as "boycott" from the dictionary, but if you follow the articles of Dr. Hale in *The Wide Awake*, you will probably learn the meaning of it, and of many more like it. The newspapers give the meaning of such words. Boycott is the name of a man in Ireland who has been treated in a way which is now called "boycotting."

It is one of the peculiarities of our language that it contains words that have been taken from most of the other languages of the world. This fact makes it easy for us to express our meaning accurately. There is the word "trick," which you all understand. It is a very old English word. "Device" has a little different meaning. It is like the Italian *divisa*. "Finesse" is still different, and is taken from the French. "Artifice" is from the Latin *artificium*, and is different from the other words in meaning, though

somewhat like them. Finally we have "stratagem," which is but another form of the Greek *stratagema*. A stratagem is a device, or trick, or artifice, or finesse, used in war. You immediately think of war when you hear the word stratagem, do you not?

If we look into the Latin, French and Italian languages, we find words very much like each one of these. The Latin has *tricar*, to play tricks; the French has *tricher*, to trick, to cheat; the Italian has *treccare*, to cheat; in English, too, we have "treachery," which is much like *treccare*. The French word *finesse* means a contrivance to gain an end; and we find in Latin the word *finis*, which we all know means "the end." In Italian, *fine* means the same thing. The word "artifice" appears with but little change in Italian and French.

When we find that the same composition in school is handed in by two boys, we think that one must have "fished" from the other, and that perhaps both have fished from some book. So, when we find the same word in different languages, we think that they have fished from one another, and it is not

always easy to say which has the best right to the word. Men who have studied the subject a great deal have concluded that many of the languages of Europe are derived from the same source, and they have found that source in Asia, among the Himalaya mountains. The language that is supposed to be the parent of English, Latin, Greek, Spanish, Italian, German and many others, is called the "Aryan," and it is not now spoken anywhere. It is represented by the Sanskrit, which is studied in our colleges much more than ever before.

Words have gone from one language to another, and have changed their meanings as they have travelled, so that in many cases they do not mean what they at first did, and you would find it difficult to see how the new meaning had been obtained. There is the word "bureau," which you often use. It was used in the olden time by the Greeks in the form "*pur*," meaning fire. Then the Latins took it up, and made it *burrus*, meaning fiery red. After a while the French made it *buire*, reddish brown. In modern French it became *bure*, a sort of coarse brown cloth of woollen goods. This cloth being used

as a cover to writing-tables, the tables were called *bureaus*, and the rooms in which such tables were, were called *bureaus*. As such *bureaus* were used by officers of government, the name was at length applied to departments of government, and even to the persons employed in them. In America we put our clothes, instead of our papers, into our bureaus. So, you see that it took a long time for the Greek "fire" to become the American chest of drawers, but the process was very natural and easy. As you study your dictionary you will see that many other old words have been thus modernized. If you will permit me to do it, I will tell you about some of these words.

You will find a great deal of history in your dictionary, if you know how to do so. Take the word "frank," which you all know the meaning of. How did it get its meaning? It was the name of those people who some fifteen hundred years ago lived in the territory that is now Germany. They were more independent than their neighbors, and loved freedom more. In the process of time the name Frank was applied to any one who possessed these traits, and Frank came to mean free and open. Even frankin-

cense is said to be so called because it gives out its fragrance so freely. "Franchise" owes its origin to these same Franks, for it used to mean freedom, liberty, and still refers to freedom from restraint, as you will see by looking into the dictionary. You will not find all of the details that I give you in the dictionary, but it will show you where to go to learn what it does not tell you.

## V.

### CAN YOU MAKE A WORD?

**D**ID you ever travel on a word?

I have heard of wonderful blankets on which persons have been transported from one part of the world to another, but I never believed that the stories about them were true; and yet I have myself been carried over seas on a word to-day. The word is "meander." You know what it means. When you see a pretty brook running through a meadow that is nearly level, you notice that it does not take a straight course. It runs from side to side of the meadow—sometimes in this direction, sometimes in that—so that you can only tell in which direction it really runs by watching it very closely. Such a brook is said to "meander;" but the question must come up, "Why is this word meander thus applied?" That question occurred to me, and I asked myself,

"Who first said that a stream meandered?" I looked into the dictionary, and found that Meander was the name of a river away over in Asia Minor—in an ancient country that we know of only from our histories and geographies, called Phrygia. Ages ago the people of Greece knew of this river, and noticed that it did not run in a straight line to the sea. One of the Latin poets, named Ovid, wrote of it, "The limpid Meander sports in the Phrygian fields, and flows backwards and forwards with its varying course, and, meeting itself, beholds its waters that are to follow, and fatigues its wandering current, now pointing to its source, and now to the open sea."

I suppose that men have been saying for two or three thousand years of very crooked things that they were "as crooked as the river Meander;" and they have long said, too, of a river of that sort, that it "meandered."

Thus you see how this word carried me over seas—with the help of my dictionary—made me look into the "Metamorphoses" of Ovid, and find out, too, that Homer and Hesiod, and other old writers, knew how crooked the little river Meander was. I have

already told you how hard it is to kill a word, and here is an example. You cannot blot the river Meander out of the dictionary. People will remember it as long as the poet's works live,—as long as the English language lives. I do not think that the man, or woman, who first said of a winding stream that it meandered, thought for a moment what an effect he or she was to have on language for all time. It was not very hard work to make that word; but if you were to try to make a word, I fear you would find it no easy task. A poet can make a word, but he cannot unmake one. There are many crooked rivers and brooks. There is the Mississippi out West, and here is the Charles right by me. Suppose I try to make people say that a brook "mississippies," instead of meanders, do you think I should succeed? Not at all.

There is another word that means "winding," or includes the idea of turning upon itself, as the river Meander does. It is "caracole." Do you know what it means? It is applied to horses, and refers to the movement that they make when very spirited, as they turn around and around with dainty tread,



first in one direction and then in another. This word comes from an old one in the Spanish language meaning a snail. Now you can guess why it was applied to the motions of a horse as he leaps from side to side, and half whirls around. Open your dictionary, and you will see a picture of a snail. Notice his shell. See how it winds around like a spiral staircase. The Spaniards apply the same word to a winding staircase, a screw, and a turning about. About four hundred years ago, the French adopted the word. They thought it a good one to use to describe the motion of a horse, and so they began to use it. After a time some English writer took the word up, and since then no one has hesitated to use it. It is a good English word.

Though *you* could not easily make a word, it has been done sometimes very readily. I will tell you of such a case. About a hundred years ago, in the reign of George III., there lived in England one John, Earl of Sandwich. He was not a very dignified earl, and people called him familiarly "Jemmy Twitcher." He was a notorious gambler, and did not wish to stop his games for anything — not even

to eat. Because his appetite called for something, however, when he sat all day at the card-table, he ordered the waiter to bring him pieces of meat between slices of bread, and these preparations came to be called after his name. Now the name is applied to those men who are seen in some of the cities with placards before and behind them, between which they stand like bits of meat in sandwiches. A word need not be very proud of such an origin. This is the story that the books give of the birth of the word sandwich ; but we cannot be sure that it is true, until we have found that it was not used before the time of the Earl of Sandwich. If you can read of a sandwich in a book printed more than one hundred and fifty years ago, you can upset all that the dictionary says about the connection of the word with the earl ; but I have not heard of its having been seen in so old a book. In his own day, Earl Sandwich was supposed to have given the name to the convenient luncheon, and somebody wrote of him and of Lord Spencer, who was said to have invented the outside coat without skirts, for men (called a spencer), the following lines : —

Two noble earls, whom, if I quote,  
Some folks might call me sinner,  
The one invented half a coat,  
The other half a dinner.

The plan was good, as some will say,  
And fitted to console one ;  
Because, in this poor starving day,  
Few can afford a whole one.

We do not say that a *person* meanders, but when we are speaking of one who goes about in an aimless manner, we say that he saunters, or roams, or perhaps that he prowls : one who prowls goes about as if he were in search of prey. To do that was called by the French, long ago, *proieler*, and that word meant to go after 'prey'—in French, *proie*. The other two words obtained their meaning when it was the fashion to make pilgrimages to the Holy Land and to Rome. In Italian the word *romeo* means a pilgrim, because all pilgrims there were supposed to go to Rome. In French the Holy Land is called *Sainte Terre*, and a man who was roaming aimlessly about and did not wish to confess that he really had nothing in view, was accustomed to say that he was

making a pilgrimage, that he was "sauntering" towards the *Sainte Terre*, or roaming towards Rome.

There is another word connected with pilgrimages that you can easily remember. Perhaps you have read of the great poet Chaucer. He wrote an account of a pilgrimage to Canterbury, in England. All of his pilgrims were on horseback, and did not ride very rapidly, I am sure, for they amused themselves by telling stories on the way. It was very common for people to make pilgrimages to the same place, and one of the gaits that their horses used on the way came, in the process of time, to be called the Canterbury gallop, and finally the "canter." You know how easy that gait is, do you not? It would almost tempt one to become a pilgrim, if a horse that would canter easily were promised him.

The pilgrims in the middle ages went to the East. It was known as the "Levant," the place where the sun rises, from the French word *levant*, rising. A severe wind that is known in those regions is called a "levanter." From these words we have a verb "levant," to run away as free as the eastern wind, without paying what you owe. Perhaps you never

heard of this word; but you will find it in your dictionary, though it is called "cant."

Is not this chapter well called "meandering"? Does it not "roam" about among a variety of words, "sauntering" here and there, and making "prey" of everything that legitimately comes within reach? To roam a little further, I will say that the word "cant," which I just used, signifies the language used by beggars and thieves, which, you know, is a sort of whine. There is a Latin word, *canto*, I sing, and some think cant is a descendant of that; but others say that it grew on British soil, and was used long ago by the Welsh. However, it now means any sort of affected or hypocritical speech. You see it is difficult to give the real origin of a word.

## VI.

### NAMES FROM COUNTRIES.

**D**ID you wonder, as you sat at the table last Thanksgiving Day, why the great fowl before you was called after a country of Europe? Perhaps you did not, but others have wondered. Probably you know that the turkey is indigenous to America, and that it came very near being the emblem of the United States, instead of the eagle. Benjamin Franklin, who suggested it, was a sagacious man in most respects, but he argued that this bird was a native of the republic, and was common, while the eagle had been all through the ages the symbol of royalty.

The turkey was introduced into Europe more than three hundred years ago, and became almost immediately a favorite on the table, but people seem to have

forgotten where it came from. The French called it *d'inde*, meaning that it came from India. Some have thought that they have meant West India, but as the Germans called it the *Calcutischer hahn* (Calcutta fowl), there is reason to believe that it was generally thought to come from East India. The Germans called it also the *wälscher hahn*, which means simply foreign fowl, and was a true designation for it. It is a little strange that the same error was made regarding our maize or Indian corn, which the French called both Turkey corn and India corn (*blé de Turquie*, *blé d'Inde*), and the Germans foreign corn (*wälscher korn*).

There is a difference of opinion about the meaning of the name of the grain from which our buckwheat cakes are made. In Worcester's Dictionary we are told that Daniel Webster said that it was named because it looked like the beechnut, and I am inclined to think that he is right; but I have a book by a learned man which says that there is a tradition that it was named because the first specimens were brought from the East hidden between the leaves of a book, so that it was not "beech-wheat,"

but "book-wheat." No doubt buckwheat did come into Europe from the East, and it is called by the French "Saracen wheat" (*blé Sarrasin*), but it is called by the Germans beech-wheat (*buchweizen*).

You see how easy it is to be led away from the truth in studying the history of words. In the case of buckwheat the dictionaries are right, as I think, and so is *Daniel Webster*. He was not the one who wrote the dictionary bearing his name, but the great statesman whose birthday is celebrated in January.

I will tell you of another word the true history of which was long unknown. The best kind of almonds were called "Jordan" almonds, and as lately as 1706 a writer who wrote a book called "A New World of Words," said that the tree that produced them "grows chiefly in the Eastern countries, especially in the Holy Land, near the river Jordan;" and in 1757, another writer who was a celebrated English botanist, made the same remark. In 1877, the statement was repeated in Smith's "Bible-plants," where we read that "the best so-called 'Jordan almonds' come from Malaga, and none now come from the country

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of the Jordan." It might have been added that none *ever* came from that country, for we have learned from an old book that Jordan almonds are simply almonds that are raised in gardens—the French for garden being *jardin*, which was corrupted into Jordan very easily, and the man who corrupted it forgot how he made the mistake, or, perhaps, he never noticed his error. It is a great deal easier to make a mistake than it is to correct one. This shows, too, how readily people follow one another. No one thought for centuries whether Jordan almonds actually came from the country of the river or not. They believed what they had been told, and when one man found that there were no almonds in the Holy Land, he did not for a moment think that it might be that none had ever been raised there. It shows that we ought to be careful to know what we are talking about, and that it requires a good deal of study to be sure of anything.

There is an island in the English channel called Guernsey, and there is a flower called the Guernsey lily, but the flower did not originate in the island. It came from Japan. There was a German botanist

named Kaempfer, who went to the East the year after William Penn founded Philadelphia, and sent home from Japan some bulbs of a new lily. The ship was wrecked off the coast of Guernsey, and some of the bulbs were washed ashore. They grew, and were noticed by the son of the governor of the island, a botanist named Hatton. He sent some home to England, and they were called, of course, "Guernsey lilies," though they had really come from Japan. The name "Guernsey lily" has within a few months been given to a beautiful English lady who has been in some way connected with the island.

I told you that it is not easy to make a word, but there was a man who made one once. It is almost the only word in our language of which we can say that it was actually made by a particular man. It is a very little word. It is "gas." How was it made? The man who made it was a celebrated Belgian chemist named Jean-Baptiste Van Helmont, and he lived three hundred years ago. Chemistry was not a science at that time, but was more properly called alchemy, and there was, no doubt, a good deal of the absurd and superstitious in what Van Helmont thought

and wrote, but he discovered gas, and made his name immortal. You know that gas is something that you cannot see, and when Van Helmont had discovered it, he gave it a name that was intended to convey an idea of its nature. The Dutch for spirit is *geest*, and out of that word he made "gas." It seems like a very simple thing to do, but if you try to make a word out of another, you will not find it easy. The old English for spirit was *gast*. The German for spirit is *geist*, and the word ghost meant the same thing once. You cannot see a spirit.

There are a number of words that seem to be allied to these. The old English word "gist" (pronounced *geest*) meant a blast of wind, which is also something that cannot be seen. The letter G in old English was sounded much like Y, and it is easy to see that "yeast" could be made of gist with little trouble. We might get "gust" from it too, and I have read that the geysers of which we learn in our geographies are so named on account of the gushing, bubbling, boiling, overflowing character that they have. Gas bubbles up through water, and rushes with a noise like a gust of wind from a bottle if it is

permitted to escape. Gist in old English meant yeast as well as a blast of wind. The German word meaning "to pour out" is *giessen*, from which we get our word gush, and this seems to show that there is a connection between all of this class of words.

It will be a pleasant and useful exercise for you to write down a number of words that have similar spelling, and then look them out in your dictionary and see if there is any connection between them. You may ask me any questions you please about them.

## VII.

### CIVILIZED AND COUNTRIFIED.

THE policeman who passes my door has given me a text for my "story" to-day. I have asked my dictionary why he is called a policeman. I find, on page 1006, that the word "police" gets its meaning from an old Greek word (*polis*), meaning a city or a state. It has several meanings, but they all are connected with the word city or state. The police are the body of officers organized (generally in cities) for the preservation of good order. Soldiers are not policemen, for the policemen are "civil" officers. The word "civil" takes me to page 234, where I find that it gets its five meanings from the Latin word *civis*, which means a citizen. You know that a civil man is one who is courteous, and the reason why he is so called is that he has the manners of one who has lived in a city. If a man is thrown frequently

with other men, he gets some of his rough points smoothed out, just as a pebble that rolls among other pebbles becomes smooth. A "civil engineer" is called so because he does engineering work for the city or state, and not for the army or navy, and he is not necessarily courteous, though he should be. You will see that the first meaning of civil is, "pertaining to a city or state, or to a citizen in his relations to his fellow-citizens or the state."

Our manners ought to be not only civil, but courteous, ought they not? On page 305, you will find that to be courteous you must have the manners that ought to characterize persons at a court. That goes a step beyond the manners of a city. There is a little more ceremony at a court than in the general life of a city. Of course we mean the best life in a city and in a court. All manners should be based on the "golden rule," which tells us to do to others as we would have them do to us. A courteous man is "urbane," that is, he has the manners of the city again, for the word urbane gets its meaning from the Latin word *urbs*, a city. He is refined, he tries not to act in a way that will bring him into conflict with others.

A man in the country does not need to be so careful, for there are not so many men to be brought into contact with there. Robinson Crusoe is a good example of a man who lived apart from others. He lost the appearance of a civilized man, at least in his dress. If he had been born on his lonely island, he might have been rough in his manners also.

There are a good many words that get their meaning from other words which are connected with the country and life there, and they show the tendency to give extreme meanings to words. We speak of pagans, and mean worshippers of false gods, but the word gets its meaning from the Latin word *paganus*, a man living in the country or in a village. In our day countrymen are not all pagans. On the contrary, some of the best people the world ever saw have lived in the country or in villages. I should be sorry to think otherwise, for I have lived a long time in the country myself. The word pagan took its meaning in the early days of Christianity, when the influence of its teachings were soonest felt in cities, and when the people in the distant places in many cases, remained heathen for some time. The word "heath-

en" itself means only one who lives on a heath, that is, not in a town or city. A heath is so called from a plant that grows on it.

What is a "boor"? Let us look on page 151. It is only a countryman, a farmer. It came to mean one who has rustic manners. "Rustic" meant simply "pertaining to the country," because the Latin word *rus* meant the country. It meant at first only rural, but then it came to mean rude, then awkward, and finally also simple or artless. I have heard a person spoken of as "countrified," but I do not like the expression. It makes an invidious distinction. The other words have so far lost their original meanings that we do not think of them except when we are having a confidential look into the dictionary.

When you speak of a "villain," you mean one who is vile, but the word gets its meaning from the Latin word *villa*, a farm. The first villains were not necessarily of bad character, but were only those dependents of the lords, who lived on the farms around the great castles which were built all over Europe in the early ages. You will find the word used with this meaning in history a great deal, but nowadays a vil-



lain is a scoundrel, a rascal, a knave. A "knave" was not at first a dishonest person, as we are told on page 741 that he now is. He was merely a boy, a man-child, and you will find that Chaucer uses the word in that sense. In German, a boy is a *knabe*, which is a form of the same word. It was probably the dishonest boys who were first called knaves, and they were the means of having the bad meaning given to a good word.

The word "imp" is one that has fallen low in this way. It meant at first simply a "shoot," a child, and after a while "a young or inferior devil," or a malignant spirit.

The word "slave" is the name of a certain people who were once made slaves of, and the Greek word "Helot," which meant slave, was the name of a city the inhabitants of which were once enslaved.

Now let us return to our policeman and the words he reminded us of. They are all connected with the word city. I find two words "policy." One has seven meanings, and the other two. The first meaning of policy is "polity," which shows that from the same Latin or Greek word we get sometimes more

than one English word with different shades of meaning. Polity and policy were originally the same, but now "polity" is confined to the "structure of a government," and "policy" is applied to the "management of public affairs." You will notice that policy means also "prudence or wisdom," and even "wit." And in Scotland it means the pleasure-grounds about a gentleman's residence. This last strange meaning arises from the fact that the gentleman has authority over such grounds as the government of a city has over its territory.

You are in a position now to guess the meaning of the word "politics." You will notice that the dictionary gives it two. The first is the better one. It is "the science of government," and includes the preservation of the morals of the people. That is a good thing, but the word and the thing have degenerated until "political trickery" can be set down as one of the meanings of politics. It means the management of a political party. That can be good, but it is so often connected with dishonesty that an honest politician is often considered a wonder. This is too bad; and if I were giving you a lecture, I should tell you

that it is one of your duties to use your influence, when you are big enough, to make politics pure and honest. "Honesty is the best policy," we have been told, and it is true enough; but the man who is honest because honesty is the best policy, is not a truly honest man. He is simply politic. If dishonesty were proved to be the best policy, he would be dishonest. Policy is not principle. Let us remember that, for we ought to get some good from our study of the dictionary.

## VIII.

### THE HOME AND THE BODY.

**I** HAVE been looking through some pages of my dictionary to-day, to find two classes of words. I have not found all of either class, but I shall tell you of some that have struck my eyes, in order that they may lead you to search for more of the same sort. The words I have looked for are those that mean dwelling-place and those that are made up in some way from parts of the human body.

You will be reminded that there is a connection between these classes of words when I mention the word "head" as one, and "headquarters" as another. The headquarters of a general is really the place where his head is, and as the whole of his body is generally where his head is, it is plain that his headquarters is his place of residence for a longer or shorter time,

though this is not exactly the way in which the word got its meaning. To "reside" is to "continue to sit," as the dictionary tells us, for it is made out of two Latin words with that meaning, and a man's "seat" is his place of residence. We more usually use the word in composition with another, as when we speak of a gentleman's "country-seat." We never say his "city-seat," though that would be as correct as the other combination, if it were only so used.

You will find that the word "head" has fourteen meanings in Webster's Dictionary. First, it means the head—that is simple enough—of an animal. If we suppose ourselves following the words we are studying, in the process of manufacture, we might, in this case, think that after the name "head" had been given to the head of a man, it would naturally be given to the topmost part of other things, such as a cabbage, a nail, a boil (to touch upon a tender point), a cane, a spear, and any other thing that had such a portion. Then some one might give the same name to the place where the head is usually or often put, as the head of a bed or of a grave. This is the way that headquarters received its name, I suppose, for it

is the head-place of an army, or the place of the head officer in it, or the chief place of a man's residence. Thus, we hear of the headquarters of a gentleman in a certain city that he may be visiting. The word "chief" is connected with the word head, for it is derived from an old French word meaning head, and the chief anywhere is the person at the head, is it not?

The word "kerchief" means something to cover the head, "coverchief" having been contracted into kerchief. A "handkerchief" is such a piece of cloth meant to be carried in the hand, or used by the hand. I might give you a great many words connected with the hand, but I cannot stop now to do it.

The third meaning of "head" is, "the most important member of any organized body," as the head of a procession, of a church, of an army, of a school, or of a government. Of course, the head-place is a position of honor, and thus it is that we speak of the head of the table, or the head of troops. The head of the family usually sits at the head of the table, but it is the head just the same though some other person sit there. It is the place of honor. Suppose you

look over a crowd. The most prominent objects you notice are the heads. Perhaps it was for this reason that the word head came to mean an individual, as when we speak of a certain number of "head" of swine or cattle. We do not often count men and women by heads, though we do sometimes count them by noses.

As it is the head of a man or other animal which directs its movements, which is the source of its actions, so it is from its head that a stream starts on its course. The next meaning is "a part of a discourse." That meaning comes through the Latin word for head, which is "*caput*," which was the origin of the word in the same language, meaning both a little head and a chapter (*capitulum*).

I shall not tell you all the other meanings of the word head, but will mention one only. The rounded mass of foam that rises on the top of a pot of beer or other liquor that effervesces, is called its head. It is at the top, and it is round like the head, but it is rather lighter than one would like his head to be, and more nearly empty.

Let us look at a few more of the words that are

connected with the head. There is headstrong, which means "obstinate." A bull is headstrong, I think. I thought so once, at least, when one of those animals came after me, throwing his great head about and holding it firmly before him, as if he wanted to throw me over the nearest fence. I saved him the trouble, I am glad to say, by getting over the fence before he caught up with me. I did not stop to pass any compliments with so headstrong a being going at so headlong a pace.

A "heady" person is not exactly a headstrong one, but he is rash and passionate; one who is testy is peevish, easily irritated, and not precisely heady nor headstrong. Testy came into the language from the French, where the word "*tête*" means head. It was formerly spelt *teste*, but the "s" was omitted and the circumflex accent has taken its place. The word "tester," which means, among other things, a canopy over a bed, comes from this same French word.

The word "sconce" is an interesting one. One of its meanings is the head. Sometimes we hear of knocking one about the sconce, but it is not elegant



English. A sconce was originally something adapted to conceal some other thing. A small fort was a sconce. Thus we speak of ensconcing ourselves behind a screen or curtain.

Now the word sconce has seven different meanings. First, it is a fort ; then it is a hut ; next it is a piece of armor for the head ; then it is the head itself ; next, a lantern, a candlestick, or a support for a candlestick ; then it is the rim into which the candle is set, a sort of candle-holder ; and lastly, it is a poll-tax, that is, a tax laid upon every "poll" or head. The word poll means head, from the idea of roundness. It is not far removed from "bolle," or ball or bulb, all of which convey the idea of roundness. There is one word derived from head that I do not find in the dictionary. It is "header." Such a thing as a rider on a bicycle takes when his machine throws him over its head and generally makes him strike upon his own. If the writer of the dictionary has a bicycle, he must know what a "header" is, and he will probably put it into the next edition of his good book.

The simplest word that I can find meaning dwelling is "inn," which means simply the house "in"

which one is. The word "in" used to be a verb, and to inn a person was to take him into a house or other place of protection. Probably "hut" comes next to inn in simplicity. It is a place of protection, concealment or residence, and reminds us of the word head, when we remember that in German the word "*Hut*" means a covering for the head. We speak of a person without a home as one with no place to lay his head, and, by inference, a home is a place where one may lay his head. Even a hut may be a home. The same word in German means heed, guard, care, so that a hut is properly a place of protection. "*Hütte*" means in German a cot, cottage, or hut. There is the same connection with the head in the Welsh word "*hotan*," which means cap, or hood, something for the head.

The word "cell" is another that means a sort of abode. It seems to imply the idea of concealment. A "lodge" is a place of abiding in the country or woods, and has some connection with the German word *Laub*, foliage, and *Laube*, a bower. A tent is a portable lodge in which cloth stretched out takes the place of the foliage which may make a bower. A

cabin is much the same as a hut, a tent or a lodge. A booth is a temporary abode, somewhat like a hut or a bower.

These names of humble abodes show how we get in English the wonderful variety of words of nearly the same meaning. They are derived from different languages. The English language is made up of words borrowed from almost every tongue on the earth, and it is all the richer for it. There seems to me no good reason why we should not take any good word wherever it is found, and adopt it into the language, and use it. Words are intended to express thoughts, and as there are many thoughts, so there must be a great variety of words. Different peoples have different ways of looking at things, and if we take the words that have been applied to various thoughts and things by different peoples, we make our language richer. It is one of the richest languages on the globe now, and must grow still richer. It ought to be our effort to use its words in their correct sense, and it is one of my purposes in these papers to tell you the different meanings of the words we use, so that you may not use them incorrectly.

## IX.

### DWELLINGS AND OTHER PLACES.

I SAID that the simplest word meaning an abode, that I could find, is "inn," but perhaps the commonest is "home." I have been thinking of this word lately, for it is woven into the names of a good many towns, and during the hot weather I have been riding on my horse from town to town among the hills and dales of Massachusetts. You can easily see that "Hubbardston," for example, is the town where a person of the name of Hubbard once lived, or that it was named after such a place. Not far from Hubbardston I found a beautiful place called "Petersham." If you have read any old English, you will immediately see that this was the "home" of Peter somebody at some time. You know that the Scotch still use the word "hame" for home. I did not pass through

Oakham, nor Pelham, nor Ashburnham, nor Hingham, nor Dedham, nor Wilbraham, but I see their names on my map, and I know that they mean that some one had a home at the spots where they are, or that they received their names from such a home somewhere else.

There is an interesting book published about the names of places, and I wish I had it here, up among the hills, for it would suggest many things for me to write about that might interest you. You will find it a pleasant exercise to look over the map and try to make out the origin of the names of places. Some of them are very amusing. I know of a place that has a name beginning with "Saint," and there is no saint in the calendar bearing the name that follows. Let us call it "Saint William." The name originated in this way: The people admired a person named William, and decided to give their town his name; but they found that there was already a town named William in their State. So they called their town "Saint" William, and Mr. William was surprised to find himself canonized in the post-office directory!

The good word "home" is one we ought to cherish.

It belongs to the family of languages called "Teutonic," or "Germanic," and you will hear it said that there is no such word in the French language, and, some say, no such place as home. I am not quite sure of the truth of this, for I have seen some very happy families in France, and I once was permitted to peep into a place there which I should call a happy home. Our poets love the word home. How much sweeter it is than such words as house, domicile, dwelling, residence, habitation, which mean something like home, but not exactly the same thing. "Home is where the heart is," some one has said. Does not that make the difference between a home and a residence? The word residence is derived from the ancient Latin, the language from which French words come; and you will find that in general the words which come from that language are more high-sounding and ornamental, but less warm and "homely" than the words that we say are "good old English."

As I have ridden through the country I have been entertained at houses called "hotels," "taverns," and simply "houses." At every place there has been a "host," or a person who received me. He

was sometimes called the landlord, or the proprietor. In one case he was simply "our folks." A tavern is a place where there is a "board," from which the guests take their food, and the people who sit around the table are called "boarders." The Latins called a board "tabula," and a hut "taberna." A little hut was a "tabernaculum," which is not far from tabernacle. I have showed you how little an alteration in the spelling of a word gives it a different meaning sometimes. Here you see that the "boarder" is the person who sits at the "border" of the landlord's "board." Tables were in old times simple loose boards, as indeed they are in some cases now.

The word "hotel" has no connection with "tavern," but is connected with hospitality, which contains all the letters of "hotel" excepting the "e," and in the same order. Does it not make you think that the shorter word has been contracted from the longer one? This is indeed the case.

Here are some words belonging to this class: Hospitality, hospital, hostel, hotel, host, spital, bedlam. When you come to study French, you will find that the word for hotel is written "hôtel," the accent over

the "o" showing that it was followed by the letter "s," which has been dropped. The Latin word to which we must look for the origin of all these words, was "hospes," which meant a stranger who was treated as a guest, or one who treats another as a guest. From this was obtained "hospitalia," apartments for guests, and from it we got "hospice," a place of refuge or entertainment for guests, and "hostel" and "hotel," which mean about the same thing.

A hospital was once only a place of entertainment for strangers — not for sick persons, though of course some of them might have been suffering from illness, like the man whom the good Samaritan took such care of. He was left at an inn that proved at once a hotel and a hospital in the old and new meanings of the words.

It is very common to find a short word made out of a long one, as the English word "cab" was made from the French word "cabriolet," and the word "alms" was contracted from the long word in Greek that is represented in English by "eleemosynary." "Spital" is one of these contracted words, and "bedlam" is another. You may have read of "Spitalfields,"



in London. It is only the fields about the hospital. The word "bedlam" is a contraction of "Bethlehem," and comes from the religious house in London known as the Hospital of St. Mary of Bethlehem, that was made a hospital for lunatics.

When you visit Paris you will find that a "hotel" there is not always a place for the entertainment of strangers, but often the palace of a person of rank, though in some cases there are persons who have money and not rank who live in them.

In the summer many persons think it pleasant to "camp" in the fields or on a mountain, as some of my young friends have done. A camp is a sort of residence. We who live in a college town know what a campus is. It is a field in which the college buildings are situated. Campus is a Latin word meaning field. When an army encamps on a field without tents or covering, it is said to "bivouac," because it is specially on its guard. The word contains the idea of careful watching. The soldiers of an army do not "reside," they "pitch their tents," or set up their quarters. They have no home, but go hither and thither.

I do not feel sure that there is any connection

between the words head and Heaven, though head was once spelt heafod, and seems to have had some suggestion of that which is "heaved" up, just as the word Heaven has; but it is a pleasant thought that there may be a connection between them. Heaven is said in the dictionary to be "the dwelling-place of God," the "home of the blessed," and there is a hymn that makes me think of this idea. It is entitled "O mother dear, Jerusalem." It refers to Heaven as the "mother-country" of mortals. It is a sign of the affection that we all bear to the place where we were born, that we speak of it as our mother-country, or our father-land, because our hearts are where our parents are; and, as the poet sings, "Home is where the heart is."

## X.

### NAMES FOR NOISES.

**I** HAVE told you how easy it is to make mistakes in the meanings of words, and that sometimes a single letter makes a great difference in that respect. I was this morning looking over a little dictionary called because it is so small the "Vest Pocket" lexicon. It contains, not the words that are in common use, but those that we seldom see, and of which we often need to ask the meaning. It is a very sensible dictionary. I find in it the two words "antipodes" and "antipedes." Do you know the difference between them? One means the "forefeet," and the other those people who live on the other side of the earth, and whose feet are directly opposite to our feet. One of these words comes from the Latin language, and the other from the Greek. In Greek the word for foot is "pous, podos," and

“anti” means “against.” So it is plain how antipodes got its meaning. The Latin word for foot is “pes pedis,” and “ante” means “before,” so it is “antipedes” that came from the Latin.

Now look up some of the other words beginning with “ante” and “anti,” and see if this difference is kept up in them. Here is “antedate,” which means “to date before the true time;” and “antepone,” which means to “place before,” or prefer, and “antediluvian,” which means “before the flood.” On the other hand, here are “anti-gugger,” which means an instrument that is against “gugger” (perhaps you will have to look into your dictionary to learn what “gugger” means), and “anti-American,” “anti-federalist,” “antipathy,” “anti-renter,” and many other words that convey the idea of being “against” something. You will never write antipedes when you mean antipodes, I am sure, now that you see why the two words differ.

“Opposite” and “apposite” are two words very much alike, but one means “suitable,” “pat,” and the other “antagonistic,” “contrary,” “diverse.” One word is composed of two Latin words, “ad,”

and "ponere," and the other of "ob" and "ponere." "Ponere" means to place, and "ad" means "to," while "ob" means "against."

You must not suppose that all words beginning with "pod" have reference to the feet, for there is "pod" itself, which means the "swollen capsule of a plant," because when you say "pod," your mouth swells out like a pod. Sometimes the dictionary gives you a meaning that does not at first explain. Perhaps when you read of the "capsule" of a plant, you do not know exactly what it is. But if you go to an apothecary's shop and ask him for some medicine in "capsules," he will show you that a "capsule" is a little covering like the pod of a plant, in which he puts medicines that are not pleasant to taste, in such a way that you can take them comfortably. The word "capsule" comes from a Latin word meaning a small box or chest, and you will find that the seeds of some plants are enclosed in little dry boxes that open at the proper time, and permit the seeds to drop out. Peas and beans drop out in this way.

There are a great many words that seem to have

been made to represent sounds. "Pop" is one, "bang" is another. You can think of scores of them, if you try. They are called "onomatopoetic" words, because they are formed to resemble the sound of the thing signified. This long word comes from two Greek words. The first means "a name," and the other means "to make," and it seems to signify that men did not think that words generally were made by them, but that they were given to them. For my part, I cannot see how men could have made words, except those that are called "onomatopoetic," like "buzz," "crack," "hist!" "whist!" and such like. I have a big book in which a very great number of words are claimed to belong to this class. Those who do not agree with the "onomatopoetic" theory, call it the "bow wow" theory; and the holders of the "bow wow" theory call the other the "pooh pooh" theory. Great students are not all above making fun of each other.

The story of Cinderella and her glass slippers is said to contain one of the mistakes that are made in the meaning and derivation of words. For the slippers in the original story are said not to have

been glass at all, but fur, which would have been much more comfortable and elegant too. How was such an error made? Millions of children have wondered over those glass slippers, and probably few have thought that there was a mistake about them. The French word for glass is "verre," which is pronounced like "vair." Now if you will look into the little vest-pocket dictionary, you will see that "vair" is an English word meaning "of different colors." If we look into the unabridged dictionary, we shall find that there is another meaning of "vair." It is a sort of fur used in ages long ago—probably at the time that the story of Cinderella was written—and it is represented by shields of different colors. You will find that Walter Scott used the word in one of his poems when he wrote "no *vair* nor ermine decked his garment." Ermine we know is a sort of fur. Now cannot you imagine some one copying the story of Cinderella who had forgotten the meaning of the word "vair," and remembered that of "verre," which is of the same sound? He would think that the writer of the story had made a mistake, and so he would have written

"verre," thinking that he had corrected it. Or, suppose he had been writing from dictation, as many did in the olden time. If he had not remembered the word "vair," he would have surely written "verre," and then, if what he wrote had been printed or copied, the error would have been fixed. I think it much more likely that the old story-teller gave Cinderella fur slippers than slippers of glass. Especially as I am told by the dictionary that "vair" was used by kings and nobles on their costly dresses.

Hug is said to be an onomatopœtic word. It is said that it is allied to "huge," "ugly," "ugh!" "ogre" and "Ugrian." Ugrians were great barbarians who lived off in the northeast parts of Europe, and they were so huge that they looked ugly to the more civilized peoples of the south, and they caused the feebler people to say "ugh!" in their fright. Somehow there is said to be a connection between "hug" and "shudder," as if one could hug anything that made him shudder. Perhaps there is such a connection, for we do throw our arms about in the same way when we hug and when we shudder. This is an interesting line of argument, but I am not sure



that it is correct. The dictionary says that "ogre" is derived from "Orcus," the god of the infernal regions in the Latin mythology, which is against the derivation that connects it with "hug" and "huge" and "ugly." And yet, there is no doubt an ogre was supposed to be ugly, and often huge, though I suppose no one ever saw an ogre.

The word "angel" is found in the dictionary of uncommon words, though most persons would say they know what it means. I remember that it came to me in its uncommon meaning more than thirty years ago, when I was reading some poet — Scott, I think it was — where a person was represented to "scatter angels" about him. It seemed strange to me, as it has seemed strange to many others since. But the little dictionary tells me that an angel in old times was a piece of money on which there was the figure of an angel. In Shakespeare there are many places where angel means the coin. One is in the third scene of the third act of King John, where we read of "imprisoned angels set at liberty." It seems to have been coined at the time that France was under the dominion of England. When was that? It was

long before the days of Queen Elizabeth, probably before the time of Joan of Arc. This word shows the connection of history and the study of words. There are many words that cannot be understood without the help of history.

Some words have completely changed their meaning, and others have two that are precisely opposite to each other. "Opera" means now a sort of play in which the words are sung, but "opera," in Latin, used to mean "works." There is a good deal of difference between play and work, some boys think. "Cleave" means both cling to and split apart. Can you guess why these differences have arisen? They are strange. An opera is a musical composition over which the composer has "worked" a good deal, and is distinguished from an "improvisation," or composition made "off-hand," or without study. The man who splits wood is said to cleave it, and the man who clings to another is said to cleave to him. One separates and the other brings together. The dictionary will show you that the words are different in their origin, but that there was comparatively little difference in the pronunciation of the old words.

## XI.

### PARTS OF THE BODY.

**W**ORDS derived from the names of portions of the human body are numerous. We have already referred to the head and some of the words connected with it. On the side of the head we have ears. The Latin word for ear was "auris," and I think you can find some words in English that show their connection with it. "Aurate" is not one of them. That comes from the Latin word "aurum," meaning gold; but on the other hand, "aural" is connected with the ear. It means "belonging to the ear." The Latins might have given us less trouble about the meaning of our words if they had not had some that were spelt alike, or nearly so, but with different meanings. There is another word, "aural," that means pertaining to the air, because the Latin word "aura" meant "a subtle, invisible fluid supposed

to flow from a body;" and there is a word "aureate," meaning golden, because the word "aurum" in Latin meant gold.

"Auric" means pertaining to gold, and "auricle" is the scientific name for the outer portion of the ear. "Auriferous" means producing gold, "auriform" means having the shape of the ear, and an "aurist" is one skilled in the diseases of the ear. It requires some study to learn the meanings of the different words derived from the Latin words "aura," the effluvium, "auris," the ear, and "aurum," gold, but study will teach one all of them, as it will surmount many other difficulties.

Between the ears is the mouth. Let us see if any words are connected with that. The Latin word for mouth was "os, oris," and, sure enough, we find some English words which plainly say that they are direct descendants of it. You can tell the descendants of certain old words as easily as you can the children and grandchildren of certain persons. Here is the word "oral," which means uttered by the mouth, or pertaining to the mouth, and "oracle" one who speaks for a deity. Here is "osculate," to kiss, which natu-

rally comes from "os," the mouth, and "osculant," adhering closely, as two mouths do when they kiss.

Above the mouth is the nose, which the Latins called "nasus," and from that word we have nasal, pertaining to the nose, or spoken through the nose, as some words are spoken, even in cultivated New England, though I hope none of my readers are guilty of doing so. "Nascent," which in the dictionary follows the words connected with the nose, has no connection with them. It is derived from a Latin word that means to be born, quite a different thing.

On each side of the nose we have an eye, the Latin word for which is "oculus," and from it we have oculist, one who treats the eye. The Greek word for eye is "ophthalmos," from which come words like "ophthalmy," which is an inflammation of the coats of the eye.

Above the eyes is the forehead, the Latin for which is "frons," from which we have front, the first meaning of which is the forehead. You will find that the man who made Webster's dictionary thought that some ladies put something on their foreheads, that is, of course, still further in the front. This he calls

a "front," and quotes Mrs. Browning to support his statement. Mrs. Browning said,

" His Helen's hair turned gray,  
Like any plain Miss Smith's, who wears a front."

Of course this must be scandal, for no woman would put a falsehood on her forehead, a place which the dictionary says is expressive of character. As I look further down the list of words derived from the Latin "frons," I find "frontlet," which is a little front, but Shakespeare makes it mean a frowning brow, in the words of King Lear to Goneril, "How now, daughter! What makes that frontlet on? Methinks you are too much of late i' the frown." A frontlet was a forehead-cloth, worn at night to give smoothness to the forehead; but Shakespeare makes the word mean a frowning look, which is far from smooth.

The brain is enclosed in a bony structure that is known as the skull—in Greek "kranion," from which come such words as craniology, the science of the skull. Sometimes phrenology is called craniology, because the theory of one of the teachers of the science

was that the traits of the mind are indicated on the surface of the skull.

We are reminded of the history that there is hidden in words, when we come to the word arm. The first meaning of the word is the natural one—the limb of the human body. The next meaning is anything that bears a resemblance to the arm, like the branch of a tree, a slender part of an instrument, or an inlet of the sea. Then we come to the figurative meaning of the word. It means power, might, strength, and here it is that we find the history of which I just spoke. The word arm comes from the Latin “armus,” the arm, and you know that in the time of the ancients, soldiers depended much upon the power of their arms in battle. They did not have guns, but were obliged to wield swords with their strong arms. Oftentimes they had to grapple with the enemy, and then it was apparent that the arm was the thing that they depended upon. This is why we call a gun an arm. It is not like an arm, but it is the article which in the modern days protects the soldier, thus taking the place of the strong arm of the Roman soldier. Any weapon used by a

soldier is an arm. Now we can see that when we read in the Bible of the "arm of the Lord," we are not to think of an actual arm, but of the power of the Lord; for the word is used in its figurative sense, as a great many words are in the Bible.

I find in the dictionary a picture of an "Armstrong gun," and I wish you not to think that it gets its name because it is an arm, nor because men have to have "strong arms" to be able to use it. Its name comes from a man named Armstrong, who invented it. Look at the picture on page seventy-five of Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, and you will see that no man could wield it with his arms. The armadillo received his name from the fact that he is so well armed.

It is strange that the word *armus* was taken for the foundation of the English word, because it meant the shoulder-blade, or upper bone of the arm, and excepting in poetry, was usually applied to that bone in the lower animals, the word "*humerus*" being used when the same bone in man was intended. I suppose it was because the poets used the word for the arm of a man, that it came to be so used by



us, for, you know, poets have a great power over all of us, and they always have had it. Their writings belong particularly to the literature of power, and not to that of instruction. It is the poets who move men by their words more than any other class of writers. The Latin word for the whole arm of a man from the wrist to the shoulder is "brachium," and it is almost the same in Greek. Do you not think of some English words that are connected with this word? The word bracelet is one. Brachiopod is another. The meaning of the first word you know, but the second is not so easy. It is a sort of animal of the order of mollusks, the arms of which seem to serve as feet. You remember that I told you once that the Greek for foot is "pous, podos."

The Latins had two words for bracelet, "armilla," and "brachiale," the first one meaning a bracelet of iron, such as a military man might wear as a badge, and the second an ornament, such as a lady might have on her more delicate arm. You will find the adjective "armillary" in the dictionary; it is a word applied to anything that bears a resemblance to bracelets or rings, or that consists of them. Any-

thing that is armillate is furnished with bracelets. It would sound rather high-flown to speak of a young lady as an armillate person, but I have seen some to whom the epithet might well be applied. Did you never see any one wearing those rings on her wrists that in Africa are worn about the wrists or ankles? They are called bangles, and I should call such a young lady "armillate."

Brace is another word derived from brachium. Its first meaning is a prop or support, something that supports a timber as a man might with his arms both extended. Shakespeare takes us back to the olden times when he makes brace mean warlike preparation, as in the line in Othello where it is said of cyprus "that it stands not in such warlike brace" as Rhodes does; but generally Shakespeare uses the word to mean simply two, as "a brace of words," "a brace of draymen," "a brace of tongues," though once, in Pericles, he gives the word in its proper etymological meaning, a piece of armor for the arm. The word "braces" is sometimes used for suspenders, which are also called "gallowses," because they suspend trousers, and the gallows are made to suspend bad men on.

The word "bracket" is also derived from *brachium*. It may mean a support somewhat like a brace, or one of two marks used in printing to include or embrace certain words.

When we throw our arms around another we are properly said to embrace him, and when we include a number of words in one chapter of a book, we say that we embrace them in the chapter, or that the chapter embraces them. Sometimes these two meanings of the word embrace are confounded.

## XII.

### THE FOOT AND OTHER THINGS.

ONE day as I was walking along one of the streets of Paris, I noticed a small sign on the side of one of the doors which read —

THERE IS A CORN-CUTTER.

I was interested in it because I lived in a country-place and raised corn which had to be cut. The house did not seem to be an agricultural warehouse; at least, not such as we are accustomed to see in America, and I looked again at the words. Then my eye was struck by the sign on the opposite side of the door, which was in French. It told me that the person who attended to business there was a "chiropodist," or one who removes corns from the feet. The man who prepared the sign for this corn-doctor was

not so familiar with the English language as he ought to have been. He was like that other business man who advertised that he "hanged business with stage-coach," because he found that stage-coach was the English for "diligence," and he knew that to "execute" a man was to hang him. He did not know, apparently, that business is not executed in the same way that a man is.

This French sign came to my mind to-day as I was thinking of the words connected with the feet. The first that occurred to me was chiropodist. The Latin word for foot is "*pes, pedis*," and as soon as you know that, you are prepared to tell the meaning of a considerable number of words beginning with *ped*, but not of all of them.

You could guess that "pedial" means pertaining to the feet, but you should not conclude that "pedagogue" has any connection with the foot, for it has not. The Greek for child is "*pais, paidos*," and a Greek pedagogue was a slave who was employed to lead a child to and from school. Pedigree does not come from *pes*, but "paddle" has a connection with it, for it means a splashing in the water with the feet; and it

seems to me that "peddle" is also one of the words connected with the foot. There is a provincial German word "padeln" that means to walk with short steps, and the dictionary says that peddle is a diminutive of "pad," which means to travel slowly on foot. A "pad," or, more commonly, a "foot-pad," is a robber who goes along the road on foot.

The French for the foot of an animal is "patte," and there is a low French word "patouiller," which means to paddle with the feet. In France, a man is said to "paddle in the mud" when he is confused and unable to express his thoughts. From this idea of splashing and paddling, there is derived the word for a frog used by Spenser in the *Shepherd's Calendar*. (December.)

"The grieslie tode-stoole growne there mought I se,  
And loathed paddocks lordling on the same :  
And where the chaunting birds luld me asleepe,  
The ghastlie owle her grievous ynne doth keepe."

This takes us a great way from the Greek word for foot, does it not? I give you considerable of the verse of Spenser, because it illustrates our subject in several ways. You will notice that Spenser did not

spell his words as we do—at least not all of them. He was very lavish with his letter E's, but economized in some other letters. He wrote "se" where we should write "see," and I cannot help thinking that he had come to the end of a line where there was room for only one "e," and so he left off the other. "Se" spells the word just as well as "see," I think. Look at the word "luld," in the third line. We should write it "lulled," but it would be no better. "Tode-stoole" is just as good as "toad-stool," and "ynne" is as good as "inn." You recollect, I hope, what I have said of the word inn. It means "dwelling" here, as we saw it did in other places.

At the time that Spenser wrote, which was long before the settlement of Jamestown, or the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, people were not careful about their spelling, if they conveyed their meaning by the letters they used. It was not until long after that that it became fashionable for everybody to spell in the same way, or for any one to spell the same word always in the same way.

Now we come to the word "padlock." Whence comes its name? Let us see. "Pad" meant to

travel slowly on foot. If we travel slowly on foot long enough over the same track, we form a "path," do we not? It is supposed that the first padlock hung on a gate, and was a "path lock," a lock that kept persons from continuing their walk on that path. This seems reasonable. Some think, however, that a padlock is so called because it hangs like a "pad," or lump, outside of the gate it fastens, instead of being let into it, as other locks are. That leads to the meaning of the word "pad," which has no connection with the feet; or, at least, seems to have none.

What is a pad? Is it not a wad? Yes, it is a wad, and a wad of something soft and wet, as a dab of clay, or mortar. It is something that can be paddled. A "padnag" was a nag that walked with short steps—a "pacer." An old glossary tells us that a "pad" was "a burthen fit either for a person on foot, or to carry behind on a padnag; item, a pad of yarn." Now when a "bundle" of straw or hair was used for one to sit upon on a horse, as English market women ride, it was called a pad, and anything flattened or laid flat, became a pad, as a pad of



blotting-paper. I think, therefore, there is a distant connection between the foot and the bottling-pad !

The base on which the foot of a statue or column is set is called a pedestal, and it is easy to see why. Especially when we know that the German word "stellen," means to place. "Pedestrian," of course, means a foot-traveller. "Pedate" means "having divisions like the feet," and is said of the leaves of plants, though they are rather divided like the hands than like the feet. A "pedal" is a lever acted on by the feet. A "pedometer" is a measure that marks the number of steps taken in walking, and thus indicates the distance passed over. A "meter" is a measure. We have gas meters, and we speak of poetical metre, because the lines of verses in poetry are measured by feet.

I suppose you have never heard of "pediluvy." It means the bathing of the feet. The "luy" part of the word reminds us of the word "alluvium," which means deposits of earth and other substances washed up by a river. The word "apace" now means with a quick pace, but it used to mean simply step by step, which might have been not a rapid

pace. "By and by" has changed in its meaning, but in just the opposite way. It used to mean immediately, now it refers to a time in the future. Those who sing sentimentally of the "sweet by and by," do not expect to reach it immediately, but rather hope it is not in the immediate future, I think !

### XIII.

#### HANDY WORDS.

**W**E were speaking of those words connected with the names of portions of the body, and had got as far as the arms. Let us now take the hands. The Latin word for hand is "manus." The French is "main," which is not very unlike the Latin, and the reason is that French is a language nearly allied to the Latin. It is called a "Romanic" language, because Latin was the language of ancient Rome. The Greek word for hand is "cheir," and but few English words are derived from it, and they only scientific words. I may say here, by way of parenthesis, that scientific students derive their words largely from the Greek and Latin. They find it easier to use words of this sort, to which they give definite meanings, than to try to get along with other words which have been long used with less exactness. So

you see there is a *reason* why the hard words you meet in your botany and your other text-books of science are used there. Here is a specimen of the sort of words that scientific men use when they are writing for each other to read. It was taken by the late Mr. Marsh from a scientific journal, and was not "made up" as you might think it was.

Begoniacæ, by their anthero-connectival fabric indicate a close relationship with anonaceo-hydrocharideo-nymphæoid forms, an affinity confirmed by the serpentarioid flexuoso-nodulus stem, the liriodendroid stipules, and cissoid and victorioid foliage of a certain Begonia, and if considered hypogenous, would, in their triquetrous capsule, alate seed, apatelaism, and tufted stamination, represent the floral fabric of Nepenthes, itself of aristolechioid affinity, while by its pitched leaves directly belonging to Saracénias and Dionæas.

This reads much like a puzzle, but it is very simple to the student of botany, and expresses the meaning of the writer better than if it had been composed in words that we should call "plain" and "simple." The reason is that these hard words have exact scientific meanings, and that it would be necessary to use several words to explain the idea that is expressed

by each one of them. Suppose you take your dictionary and see what work you would make in trying to express the thoughts in this paragraph in simple words. You would have trouble with the first word, for you would find that it means a sort of plant named after a French scientist, "M. Begon," and that it is an "interesting" sort, "common in our gardens." Webster would tell you that the leaves are "curiously one-sided, and often exhibit brilliant colors," but that does not tell you exactly what the plant is. You would not discover "anthero-connectival" in your dictionary, but you would find a picture of an anther, and that would tell you something about the meaning of the word. You would find that it would require three or four words for every one that is used in the paragraph, to rewrite it in "plain" language, and that even then the meaning would not be so clear to the reader as it is now to the scientific student for whom it is written.

After I had written thus far, I opened a letter from one of my friends living in New York State, who asks me some questions, showing that she too is studying words; and the interesting fact about

the note is that she asks me to explain the words "hand" and "handsome," which I had just begun to talk about. You will find that Webster gives twelve meanings of the word "hand," and Worcester fifteen; but they are not all in use now. Some were used in old times; as Bacon said "bought at a dear hand," meaning at a high price. We now use the word to mean first, the extremity of the arm, and then that which resembles it, or has a use similar to that of the human hand, such as the "hand" of a clock, which points. You will see that the meanings grow naturally out of the original sense.

From the word "hand" comes "handy," which means skilful in the use of the hand, or "dexterous." Dexterous gets its meaning from the Latin word for the right hand, "dexter." There is a long list of words that begin with "hand," and the meaning of each one is very natural. A handy boy or girl is one who can use the right hand with dexterity. Men have always been admirers of those who are able to *do* something. Centuries ago Englishmen had a word "handsom" which meant about the same as handy. Men who were able to work dexterously were called

handsome; and other persons admired them. You can see from this why handsome is a more dignified word than "pretty." A pretty person does not appear to have any special ability, does he? A handsome horse is one that appears trained to perform his work well, and the same is true of a handsome "player," as mentioned by an old writer. A "pretty" player might be very poorly qualified to act well. This all shows why the old proverb had so much force—"handsome is that handsome does;" that is, we admire that which shows training to some useful end.

You have heard that commentators are in the habit of passing over the difficulties that they cannot explain, as if they were so plain that they needed no explanation. Perhaps you will think that Webster's dictionary has done this in its treatment of the word "handicap," which is the only one under the head of "hand," that does not seem to be explained at all. It seems at first sight to be connected with "hand i' the cap," but exactly how the connection is to be established one does not see so clearly. Webster does not tell you that there used to be a

game called "handicap," but it seems there was, for Mr. Pepys who wrote a famous Diary, said on September 18th, 1660, that he then first played a game called handycap. It appears to have been played with cards, and it seems that certain differences were settled by handing into the cap or "pool" a sum of money. There seems to have been in olden time a method of settling bargains called handicapping. The idea involved in the word "handicap" seems to be that of drawing lots, and of equalizing differences, which is the idea that racing men give it when they speak of handicapping horses, by adding to the weight of some or lessening that of others, or of giving one horse an advantage in point of time over another.

There are a number of other English words connected with "hand," that do not have the word in them. They are derived directly from the Latin "manus," or indirectly from it through the French "main." Manner is one of these words. It means the style of doing anything. You remember how the idea of doing is connected with the hand, the instrument with which we do so many things. Shakespeare



knew this, when he made Hamlet say, speaking of the drinking habits of the court of Denmark —

Though I am native here,  
And to the manner born, it is a custom  
More honored in the breach than in the observance.

This is often quoted "manor," as if Hamlet meant to say that he was born in a particular house. He was referring to the "custom," not the court. Shakespeare knew that there was a connection between the French word "main," and the English word hand, when he made Prince Henry say to Falstaff,

O villain, thou stolest a cup of sack eighteen years ago, and wert taken with the manner;

that is, wert taken with the sack *in thy hand*. This is an old law term. Shakespeare liked to make puns, and he made some appropriate to our subject, in "Love's Labor's Lost," Act 1., Sc. 1., both on the word "style" and the word "manner," thus:

*Biron.* Well, sir, be it as the style shall give us cause to climb in the merriness.

*Costard.* The matter is to me, sir, as concerning Jacquenetta. The matter of it is, I was taken with the manner.

*Biron.* In what manner?

*Costard.* In manner and form following, sir, all those three : I was seen with her in the manor-house, sitting with her upon the form, and taken following her into the park ; which, put together is in manner and form following. Now sir, for the manner — it is the manner of a man to speak to a woman : for the form — in some form.

*Biron.* For 'the following,' sir?

This is a good specimen of Shakespeare's fondness for punning. He uses "style," first, both as meaning manner and stile ; then he uses "manor" and "form" and "following" with several meanings.

I have on my list of words connected with the hand, maintain, mansuetude, manure, manufacture and others, but I leave them for you to look up.

## XIV.

### BOW-WOW AND POOH-POOH.

**T**HERE was once upon a time a man who had a very determined wife. One day as he sat in the village store, some one asked him why he was like a donkey. He gave it up, and was told that his better half was obstinacy itself. It struck this innocent man that this was a pretty good conundrum, and that he would repeat it to his wife when he returned home. When he asked her, "Why am I like a donkey?" she calmly replied, "I suppose it's because you were made so." He did not think the conundrum sounded so amusing at home as it had at the store.

This anecdote has little to do with the dictionary, but it comes to my mind when I read the discussions about the origin of speech. Animals of the lower orders do not speak, and when the question is asked,

"Why are men able to speak?" I can think of no reply so good as that of the woman to her husband, "I suppose it's because they're made so." I told you once that some people think that men began to speak by imitating the sounds they heard about them; that they called the sheep a "baa," the dog a "bow-wow;" that they imitated the sound of splashing water, whistling wind, falling stones, rustling leaves, and so on, and that thus by degrees a language grew up. Others say that men began to speak when they were excited, and perhaps first said "oh!" "ah!" "pshaw!" or something like those interjections. Max Müller, the great English writer on these subjects, calls the first the "bow-wow" theory, and the second the "pooh-pooh" theory. His own belief is that man, like every substance in nature, had his peculiar ring; that everything that is struck rings, and that as a piece of metal when struck emits a sound characteristic of it, so man, when first struck by an idea, emitted an articulate expression. This has been called the "ding-dong" theory. Now all these theories are too deep for our purposes, and I think we shall be obliged

to go back to the assertion that man has the faculty of speech "because God made him so." Max Müller says that all investigations into the science of language brings us to the statement of the Bible, that there was a time when "the whole earth was of one language and of one speech." All the different languages of the world came from this original speech. What it was, no one knows now. Learned men have traced the chief European languages back many centuries, to a language that was spoken among the high mountains in the middle of Asia, and some day you will be interested to learn how this was done. When you grow up, you will probably know much more about it than the wisest of us know now, for scholars are studying the subject all the time in different lands.

Probably you think that "roots" of words are dry things to read of or to talk about, but I want you to think a little while of some of them. Suppose you utter the word "blow." Is it not very much like blowing the wind from your mouth? When you begin to utter the first two letters, "b-l," you fill your mouth with air and force it out, keeping

the lips closed at first. Now we will look at some other words that have the same sounds in them. Here is "bloat," which means to swell, or to puff out, as your face was puffed out when you uttered the word blow. "Blob" and "bleb," both mean a bubble or a blister, and contain the idea of swelling. "Blub" and "blubber" belong to the same class, the letters "o" and "e" being changed for "u," but the "b-l" being left to express the idea of swelling out.

"Bladder" gives the same suggestion. It means a bag or sac, especially in an animal, as the gall bladder, for example. A "blister" is a thin bladder on the skin, and a "blain" is a sort of blister. A "blast" is a blowing, a violent movement of the air, especially a stream of air from an orifice, like the mouth. ("Orifice" is derived from the Latin word "os, oris," which means the mouth. A blast is also a sound made with a wind instrument, or by the wind itself, as when we read:

As when the sea was waving,  
With hollow blasts of wind.

The poet did not call the blast "hollow" because

it was nothing but air, but rather because it sounded like the wind roaring in a hollow cave. I suppose we all think of the blast of the bugle horn of Roderick Dhu, or of that which was heard in the pass of Roncesvalles, of which Scott speaks —

Oh, for one blast of that dread horn,  
On Fontarabian echoes borne,  
Which to King Charles did come,  
When Roland brave and Oliver,  
And every paladin and peer,  
On Roncesvalles died!

We speak of “blasting” rocks, because the process consists in putting into the rock something that suddenly comes out with great force.

“Blatant” is another word of the same class. It means “bellowing” as a calf, noisy. “Bell” itself means to bellow, and was so used by an old writer, who said —

As ravens, screech-owls, bulls and bears  
We'll bell and bawl our parts.

This shows us that “bawl” also is related to the words we are talking of. It means to make a loud,

full sound. The word bell suggests the changes that come over meanings, for we say that a sound is as clear as a bell, which we should hardly say of a bellow. The bell is so called because it emits a resonant noise.

While we are speaking of noises, I wish to recommend you to read a poem by the ancient poet Chaucer, called the *House of Fame*. You will find in it a great many interesting passages about sound, and its transmission. I find in the third book, these lines :

Eolus anon upsterte,  
And with his black clarion  
'He 'gan to blasen out a soun,  
As loude as belloweth wynde in helle.

We do not usually speak of a "blaze" of sound, but blaze means the bursting out of any quality, and in that sense we might say with Chaucer, a blaze of sound. To blazon is to display, to spread out in such a way as to exhibit, and this is intimately connected with the idea of a blast.

"Bleat" means to make a sound like a sheep; and to "blurt," is to utter suddenly; "bluster" is violent



windy noise, and the *Spectator* mentions heroes "swelling and blustering upon the stage," showing the connection of the words we are speaking of. "Bloom," "blossom," and "blush," are of the same family, and when Mr. Disraeli wrote of "Blushing like a Worcestershire orchard before harvest," he also showed the connection between "blush" and bursting forth like a blast, for does not a blush break out on the face? When we say that a thing has a certain appearance "at the first blush," we mean that when it first bursts upon our view it so appears.

We see from our study of these words how easy it is to make difference of meaning by very slight differences in the form of words. Thus as we have seen, a bell emits a clear and attractive sound, but it is allied to bellow. A blush bursts out, and so does a blaze, but they are not equally agreeable. We see this still more when we find that "blare," and "flare," "flatulent," and "inflate," belong to the same family. "Blare" is a roaring sound; a "flare" is a sudden bursting forth of light; a "flatulent" writer is one who is empty, puffy, pretentious, inflated, and

"inflated" means blown out or into. As in the words of Dryden :

With might and main they chased the murderous fox  
 With brazen trumpet and inflated box, (*wind instrument*)  
 To kindle Mars with military sounds,  
 Nor wanted horns t' inspire sagacious hounds.

## XV.

### SOME HARD WORDS.

THE other day I heard a young lady speak of a man who, she said, was "ostracised," and it led me to wonder whether she knew the meaning of the word she used. If you look into a scientific work about living creatures in the sea, you will find the word "ostreaceous" used as applied to that which is shelly, or that pertains to the oyster. Many people who live on the seashore may properly be called the hard name "ostreophagists," though perhaps they might feel insulted, the word is so unusual. It means simply oyster eaters, and there is nothing bad about that.

What did the young lady mean when she said that the man was ostracised? She meant that he had been guilty of some behavior that his neighbors did not approve, and that they did not associate freely and cordially with him. He was not an ostreophagist,

horrid as you may think that name sounds ; nor was he ostreaceous, though he may have been as crusty as a shell fish appears. Men who keep to themselves are called " crusty," but not " crustaceous," as oysters are said to be. A man who deserves to be ostracised, is sometimes familiarly called a " hard case," though the dictionary does not give us authority to use the expression.

We have now before us a number of words that may well be called " hard." The dictionary tells me that the word " ostracism " had its origin in the beautiful city of Athens hundreds of years ago, and that it was applied to the banishment of a person whose merit and influence gave umbrage to the people. Perhaps it will be well to turn over to page one thousand four hundred and thirty-three of the dictionary, to see exactly what " umbrage " means. We shall find it one of the most expressive in the big book. The Latin word on which it is based is *umbra*, which means a shade, and when you feel that another throws you into the shade, you may say that he gives you umbrage, or overshadows you. Testy persons become jealous of those who thus " stand in their light."

You will see that Walter Scott wrote once of some who "feel umbrage from the overshadowing of the aristocracy."

Aristocracy is a word that is based on one in the Greek language meaning the best, but it is now applied to the members of the highest ranks in England, and though they ought to be the best there they are not always worthy of the good name they bear. It was the best who were banished from Athens by ostracism, so the dictionary says, and not those who thought themselves the best, nor those who merely belonged to a high order of society.

Now the question will rise in the minds of my bright readers, what connection is there between ostracism and oysters, and this brings us to an interesting point in our discussion. On page 935, the dictionary tells us that the Latin word for oyster was *ostrea*, and the Greek *ostreum*, which is very much like the Greek word that meant bone, and that the Greeks named the oyster as they did because it has so hard a shell. They called another hard thing—a piece of burnt clay—*ostrakon*, which was the name they gave to the hard shell of the oyster. When the Athenians voted

to determine whether a person should be ostracised or not, they wrote their votes on shells or tiles, and that is the reason that that sort of banishment was called ostracism. This shows how words are made. Perhaps you have noticed that they are still made, though when a man sets out to make one he finds it no easy task. I think that Doctor Hale explained once how the word "boycott" was made out of the name of a man who was shunned by his neighbors in Ireland. It is a terrible thing to be ostracised or boycotted, and men who have the experience learn how much all men depend on each other. It was because one Mr. Boycott was shunned by his neighbors that a verb was made of his name.

Severe as the punishment is, it is right that a man who does wrong acts, and does not repent of them and leave them, should be ostracised by his neighbors. If they continue to associate with him, they show a certain sort of approval of his conduct, and encourage him in wrong. It is not often nowadays that good people are ostracised, though, of course, such a case might occur. I think that the world is better than it was in old times. We can find evidence

of this in the way words are used now and formerly were.

In the times of our grandparents, it was customary to call a duel an "affair of honor." Now what is a duel? It is a fight between two persons who coolly stand up to shoot at one another, to see which will be able to hit or kill the other. They have had a quarrel, perhaps about some quite unimportant matter, and one has taken umbrage at something that the other had said. Perhaps one has called the other a bad name. The one who thinks he has been dishonored wishes to have the other one allow him to shoot at him. After they have stood up and fired their pistols at each other they go away satisfied. Perhaps one is shot and killed. Then the other says that he has had "satisfaction;" that the stain has been washed from his character. Is it true that doing one bad deed washes away the stain? It seems to men nowadays that their fathers were mistaken in this matter, and they make laws that say that killing a man in a duel is murder, and not an "affair of honor." Instead of praising such a man, they shut him up in prison or hang him.

It is a great pity when things are not called by their right names, and we ought to take pains to make no mistakes of this kind. When a clerk steals money from his employer, we ought to call him a thief, and not a "defaulter." When a man or woman is guilty of any sin or crime, we should not say that he has "met a misfortune." When a person tells lies, we ought to say so, and not smooth the matter down by saying that he exaggerates or "romances." Calling one who had killed another in a duel a "man of honor," is only one of the ways that people had in old times of not calling things by their right names, and I am sorry to say that we have not entirely outgrown the habit of trying to make vice less hateful by the same easy method.

The beginning of this chapter, as I look back at it, reminds me how much we use words in a metaphorical sense. The word metaphor is of Greek pedigree, and is composed of two which embody the idea of carrying something over. Thus when I say that a man is a mule, I give him the characteristic trait of that obstinate animal. I might say more plainly that he was mulish, but the expression would be less



pleasing. In the same way, when we speak of a man as "crusty," we do not mean that there is actually a crust over him, but simply that he is as difficult of approach and as disagreeable as he would be if he were covered with such a hard substance. When we say that a man is a "veritable oyster," no one supposes that we mean what we say, but think of the man mentioned as shut up to himself, and as unsocial as an oyster is supposed to be.

When I used the word "pedigree" just now, it was not with its usual meaning, which is a genealogical table which shows the relationship between the different persons in a family ; but we have seen that words belong to families and are related to one another as men are, and therefore have pedigrees as men have.

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